



LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

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Get Those Travel, School Shots Out of the Way Now

If your summer vacation plans include foreign travel, do you know which vaccinations you need? If you have children entering kindergarten or seventh grade in the fall, do you know which vaccinations they need?

Ideally, you should complete travel shots 4-6 weeks before you leave the country, according to Beth Cottingham, public health nurse with the Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department. “Most vaccines take time to build up immunities in your body, and some have to be given in a series over weeks,” she said.

Required and recommended vaccinations vary depending upon your travel destination.

And though it’s hard to think of next school year when this one hasn’t even ended, Cottingham recommends getting those shots out of the way early.

“That way you won’t have to worry about them when you start focusing on all your other back-to-school preparations and when everyone else is scrambling to take care of them,” she said. “And your child won’t have to spend the summer worrying about them either.”

Students entering kindergarten and seventh grade are required by law to have certain immunizations before they’ll be allowed to attend class in the fall. These are:

Kindergarten

- Required: Booster doses of DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis), polio, and MMR (measles, mumps, rubella)
- Recommended: Booster doses of varicella (chicken pox) and hepatitis A

Seventh Grade

- Required: Tetanus-containing vaccine (Tdap, which also protects against diphtheria and pertussis, or Td), second dose of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) if the student has not already received it
- Recommended: Booster doses of varicella (chicken pox); other adolescent vaccines including hepatitis A, meningitis, and HPV (human papillomavirus); and pneumococcal vaccine for those with chronic health problems such as asthma and diabetes

For all of these immunization needs, the health department holds walk-in immunization clinics every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the department's 1930 Ninth Avenue office. No appointment is needed. To expedite your visit, please bring immunization records with you to the clinic.

The department can bill insurance companies for the cost of immunizations, so it's helpful to know whether your insurance covers them. Children may be eligible for reduced rates in some cases.

"Nobody will be turned away because they can't afford to pay for children's immunizations," Cottingham said.

For more information, contact the health department at 443-2584.

The Lewis & Clark City-County Health Department's mission is to improve and protect the health of all Lewis & Clark County residents.

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